

REMARKS

The office action of April 21, 2005 has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered.

STATUS OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1, 2, 4-27, and 29-36 are pending in the application; and claims 1, 2, 4-27, and 29-36 have been rejected. By way of this Amendment, claims 1, 27 and 33 are now amended, claim 17 has been cancelled, and claims 37 and 38 have been newly added.

The Examiner notes that claims 26-29 were intended to be included in the rejection set forth in section 8 of the previous office action dated October 8, 2004. Claims 1, 4-27, and 29-32 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over "SPECIFICATIONS FOR HEAT FLASH OFF FOR WATERBORNE BASECOAT APPLICATION" (hereinafter "the Specifications reference") in view of US 6,280,800B1 to Thiele et al ("Thiele") or US 6,432,490B1 to Rekowski et al ("Rekowski") or US 4,988,537 to Tanimoto et al ("Tanimoto") as set forth in section 8 of the October 8, 2004 action. As previously mentioned, claim 17 has been cancelled, and independent claims 1 and 27 have been amended to indicate that the infrared radiation applied in step (b) is applied at a power density of 2.5 to 12 kW/m² (that is, the equivalent of 1.61 to 7.74 Watts/in²). Support for the amendment can be found in the Specification and in now cancelled original claim 17. The remainder of the rejected claims either depend directly or indirectly from the amended independent claims. By contrast, the Specifications reference requires a density of 15 Watts/in² to 50 Watts/in² for the infrared system disclosed therein. This power density is necessary "to meet temperature requirements" (see the Specifications reference, General Specifications Section P-240 at page 5). Thus, the Specifications reference, neither alone or in combination with any of the secondary references cited in the office actions, does not teach or suggest the claimed process; nor would one skilled in the art be motivated to apply infrared radiation at a power density as low as that recited in the amended claims.

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as set forth in the prior Office Action dated October 8, 2004 in section 9 as applied to claims 1, 4-27, and 29-32 in

further view of US 5,401,790 to Poole et al. Claim 2 depends directly from now amended claim 1. In view of the aforementioned claim amendment, Applicant asserts that the subject matter of claim 2 is both novel and unobvious over the Specifications reference either alone or in any combination with the cited secondary references. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 2 is respectfully requested.

Claims 33-34 and 36 stand rejected because the Examiner indicated that the Specifications reference discloses power densities within the claimed range, but no motivation therein exists to apply two different power densities and air flow streams. Nevertheless, the Examiner alleged that the processes recited in these claims are not necessarily different from the process disclosed in the Specifications reference. The Examiner reasoned that the claimed process steps are applied in the same location, hence for the claims as written, steps (b) and (c) may be an arbitrary divide in a single step 60 –150 seconds long, where no actual changes occur in the applied parameters. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Claim 33 is directed to a “semi-batch” process for coating a substrate. At page 5, paragraph [0019], a “semi-batch” process is defined as one in which “the substrate may remain stationary in a single location for one or more steps in the process” Also, by the term “dried” as used in the present application is meant that the basecoat is dehydrated (and volatile organics removed) to a solids content of about 80-95% by weight (see page 15, paragraph [0049]). Step (b) provides a “pre-dried” basecoat formed on the substrate surface while step (c) provides a dried base coat. That is, each of the separate steps (b) and (c) provides a different result. Applicants assert that given the recitation of the two separate process steps (b) and (c), and the different results derived from each step, coupled with the statement that in a semi-batch process more than one step can be carried out while the substrate remains stationary in a single location, the claims steps (b) and (c) are NOT an arbitrary divide in a single step 60-150 seconds long. Moreover, in view of the amendment to claim 33 to indicate that in step (b) the power density is 2.5- 12.0 kW/m² and in step (c) the power density is 2.5 – 20.0 kW/m², the claimed process is necessarily different from that disclosed in the Specifications reference. Support for this amendment can be found in the Specification, for example, at paragraph [0037] and in the claims as originally filed, e.g. original claim 17. Likewise the rejection of claims 33-36 as set forth

in section 6 of the most recent Office Action is now moot in view of the above-described amendment of claim 33. Consequently, the rejections as to claims 33 to 36 should be withdrawn.

New dependent claims 37 and 38 add further define claims 1 and 33, respectively, in that the infrared radiation is emitted at a wavelength ranging from 0.76 to 2 micrometers. Support for these newly added claims can be found in the Specification, e.g., at paragraph [0039]. Note that in the Specifications reference, only a medium wave length infrared radiation is disclosed, i.e., 2 to 4 microns, at a power density of 15-50 Watts/sq. in.. Applicant asserts that the new dependent claims 37 and 38 are novel and unobvious over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all pending claims in the application are in condition for allowance and a favorable response is requested. If the Examiner has any questions, please contact Applicant's representative undersigned below at (724) 934-5450.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Deborah M. Altman", is written over a horizontal line.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
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